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SHORTER NOTES

LESPEDEZA VELUTINA BICKNELL A HOMONYM. — Instances are not rare in which a homonym is published so soon after the first use of the name that the occurrence can scarcely be laid to negligence on the part of its author in selecting a valid name. The following case appears to be one of such instances.

Lespedeza Bicknellii nom. nov.

Lespedeza velutina Bicknell, Torreya **1**: 102. 28 S 1901. Britton, Manual 1048. O 1901; ed. 2, 1068. 1905.

Not *Lespedeza velutina* Dunn; Hooker, Icones Plantarum **7**: *pl. 2700.* F 1901. A native of China.

The type of *L. velutina* Bicknell and therefore of *L. Bicknellii* is, "from Woodlawn, N. Y. [E. P. Bicknell], August 28, 1898, flowers; September 25, 1898, fruit: in the herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden."

H. D. HOUSE.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

REVIEWS

English Edition of Goebel's Organographie der Pflanzen*

The English form of Professor Goebel's important work, which has been awaited for several years, has at last been completed, and the second part is now issued and is the most recent publication of classical botanical productions which the Clarendon Press has given to the English-speaking world. While the discrepancy of time between the appearance of the second part in the two languages is rather long, we remember that the translation has been a task of no mean magnitude.

The botanists of the present moment are at a point in the history of their science which is unique. Looking backward we may see that, at the beginning of what we may call modern botany, all its students trod the same path. During this period the science was purely descriptive of the externals of the plant organism. Occasionally, men in other fields of scientific work attempted to solve some of the riddles of internal structure and of physiology, but when they claimed admission to the ranks of the botanists they were regarded as interlopers. Botany remained for a time a virgin science, whose fecundity was revealed only after union with physics and chemistry. From the time when the botanist accepted the wider definition of his science, the original path became divided at first into two, one of which was directed toward the goal of physiology and the other toward that of description. The latter trend of study led to the necessity of common descriptive terms and of this necessity was produced a morphology which culminated in classification of plant parts by referring them to a "few elementary forms" which forms, however, have a subjective reality only. This is the idealistic morphology of Goethe, which in its time served well its purpose. The "uniformity" of life discovered by this morphology was a conception which prepared the mind for the theory of descent, under which the variety of organic life could be subsumed. It soon overleaped itself, however, and became a mere formalism. The plasticity of nature was lost sight of in the rigidity of subjective conceptions. So markedly true has this been in some quarters, that the belief is held to with a tenacity which would be more praiseworthy if exerted in a better cause, that the sole business of morphology is to say that things are so rather than how they come to be so. There are certainly two ways of viewing an organ. We may look at it simply as such, restricting our legitimate curiosity, and contenting ourselves with a mere description of it; and then we may search about in the limitless field of observation, and when we find a similar form, seize upon it, and with a sigh of satisfaction, call it a homology, thinking our task done, much as a curiosity collector does in finding a particular object of his cupidity. Or we may see in form a measurable expression of forces at work in the living organism; we may by experiment get at some more adequate notion of its service in the economy of the plant; we may by searching find out why similar forms are produced in different organisms and why in similar organisms, different structures are produced; in this way we may get at some conception of why the plant is as it is. These are the real aims of causal morphology. "Even if we had the story of development spread out clearly before us, we could not content ourselves with the simple determination of the same; for then we should be constrained to ask ourselves how it has been brought about." In the realm of plant morphology, therefore, the point of view of physiology helps us to see that by the method of causal morphology we may ultimately attain to the knowledge which we seek.

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* Organography of Plants, especially of the Archegoniatae and Spermophyta, by Dr. K. Goebel, Professor in the University of Munich; authorized English edition by Isaac Bayley Balfour, King's Botanist in Scotland. Part I., General Organography, i–xvi + 1–270, *f. 1–130.* 1900. $3.10; Part II., Special Organography, i–xxiv + 1–708, *f. 1–417.* 1905. $7.00; royal 8vo. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

The chief prophet of causal morphology is Goebel, and the "Organography" is his prophecy. There are few books so rich in observation and so suggestive of discovery as his. The sharp delimitations drawn between our knowledge and our ignorance, the fearless denunciation of self-delusion, make this task well worth the sustained effort which it cost the author. It will be most regrettable, now that the results are available in English as well as German, if the coming years do not bring a harvest to the master workman. We believe that no book of the present day is of deeper significance for the development of botanical knowledge. We can only feel a certain disappointment that the task became, in its latter part, so very great that the author was compelled, by circumstances, some of which were beyond his control, to curtail a portion which would have been of much greater value if it had been treated more at length.

F. E. LLOYD.

NEWS ITEMS

The September *Journal of Botany* announces that owing to ill health Mr. George Murray has resigned the keepership of the Department of Botany of the British Museum.

Dr. and Mrs. N. L. Britton, of the New York Botanical Garden, and Mr. Stewardson Brown, of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, were in Bermuda for the first three weeks of September.

Mr. Edward W. Berry, secretary of the Torrey Botanical Club, has removed to Baltimore, where he will be engaged in palaeobotanical work for the Maryland Geological Survey, with headquarters at Johns Hopkins University.